

About LCHC

History of Lee College Huntsville Center (LCHC)

Lee College started offering college courses for credit in the Texas Department Criminal Justice (TDCJ) in 1966. Dr. George Beto, director of TDCJ at the time, wanted to offer programs that would prepare an offender for life in the outside world. Dr. Beto contacted Dean Rundell of Lee College, who was a friend of his, and the program was born. Dean Rundell was impressed with the plan its potential and the Lee College Board of Regents agreed to participate in the program with the understanding that the full cost of the program would be borne by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

The academic program began in the fall semester of 1966 with five classes and 176 students. Vocational classes were first offered in the spring of 1967. By the fall semester of 1968, 688 students were enrolled in 25 academic and vocational classes.

Full-time instructors teaching just in the prison extension program were first hired for the vocational classes in 1967. Academic classes were initially taught by instructors from the main campus. Increasing academic class loads in the prison program resulted in the hiring of the first academic instructor working full time in the prison extension program in 1978. Shortly after that, an administrator, located in Huntsville, with full-time administrative responsibility for the prison extension program, was hired, and in the years that followed a full complement of Huntsville-based full-time academic and vocational instructors were hired as well. By 1984, the program was run, as now, as a separate extension of Lee College, based in Huntsville.

LCHC Today

At present, the Dean of the Huntsville Center supervises 26 full-time academic and vocational faculty as well as one Director of Students Services, a recruiter, one part-time technical counselor, one PC technician, and an office staff of four, a total of 33 full-time employees with an operating budget of over two million dollars. These employees of the Lee College Huntsville Center were awarded recognition for their 1991 contribution to the Walker County United Way Campaign. In 1995 and in 2009, the Huntsville Center program received exemplary rating in three technical programs by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

In addition to the full-time faculty, adjuncts, or part-time instructors are hired on a semester by semester basis as needed to teach specialized courses, or to teach subjects where there is a large student enrollment. Many of these adjuncts are from the Huntsville area as well.

LCHC employees meet the higher education needs of inmates on a contractual basis on seven units of the Central Region of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and one private prison in Cleveland, Texas. Student enrollment averages about 1,000 students per semester. To enroll, offender students must meet all academic requirements of the college and the state, in addition to security clearance requirements of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

Current Financial Stats and Recidivism Data for LCHC

The state will pay for the cost of the offender's initial academic course each semester. However, the student must repay the State for the loaned amount as a condition of parole. In 2006 the repayment amount was \$457, 726. Since the requirement was enacted, the total repayments have amounted to \$2.6 million.

In 2006: (TDCJ Fiscal Year 2006 Statistical Report)

- Estimated amount to house an inmate \$40.06/day – \$14, 621/year
- 60, 197 male inmates were released
- The average education of those released was 7.81 years
- The average age of men released was 34.6 years (prime employment years)

Inmates who completed two years of college have 10% recidivism rate compared to 60% for those receiving no additional education (Kemp Study, 2003).

Assuming 60% recidivism of those with no education (see above) 36,118 will return

Assuming 10% recidivism if inmate earns two years of college 6,019 will return

Cost for one year for the 60 percent (no education) who return: \$528,081,278

Compared with:

Costs for one year for the 10 percent (two years of college) who return: \$88,003,799

**Recidivism is defined as "a tendency to relapse into a previous condition or mode of behavior; especially: relapse into criminal behavior," according to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary.*

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